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nearly \$725,000,000, whereas the total National debt amounted to not more than \$900,000,000, and the total State debt to less than \$229,000,000, the growing importance of this branch of the law is readily appreciated. When we reach our great cities the importance of the questions of local finance—taxation, assessments and indebtedness—so far outweighs all questions of State finance as to make the former the problem uppermost in the taxpayer. As regards the chapter on the legislative control over municipal corporations the author has not been quite so happy in his methods of treatment nor in the arrangement of cases.

One point, however, is brought out with great clearness, viz., the clear recognition of those functions which are purely local in their nature, and over which the municipality, as such, ought to have complete control. Although the traditions of our courts give but little encouragement to this principle, the trend of later decisions is unmistakably in its favor. The value of this chapter in the present work would have been greatly enhanced had the author considered more in detail the instructive history of the attitude of the courts towards municipal public works. Nothing brings out more clearly than this line of decisions the American theory of municipal government. The cases cited show that all the material was at hand, which makes the omission doubly regrettable.

The work, on the whole, will undoubtedly serve the purpose for which it is intended. That it will supplant or even offer anything beyond DILLON'S "Commentary" is more than doubtful. We have still to await the work which shall treat, not only of the present condition of the law of municipal corporations, but also its relation to the complicated economic and political problems of finance and administration which are at present confronting our great cities. L. S. ROWE.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR GOOD CITY
GOVERNMENT, held at Philadelphia, January 25 and 26,

1894, together with a Bibliography of Municipal Government and Reform and a Brief Statement Concerning the Objects and Methods of Municipal Reform Organizations in the United States. Philadelphia: The Municipal League. 1894.

The proceedings of conferences do not, as a general rule, make interesting reading, but the conference, held on January 25th and 26th last, lends to the report an interest and value, which is quite exceptional. It was the first, but we feel confident, by no means, the last Conference on Good City Government, and marks the awakening of a new municipal spirit. It takes the average American citizen a long time to see that the conditions which confront him have changed, and that the political organization and administrative methods, which works well among a people who live in small towns, may be wholly inadequate to grapple with the very difficult problems, which concern a million or more of people gathered together in a comparatively small area.

Like all reports of conferences, the papers read at the meetings have been reprinted. Without making any invidious distinctions, the paper of LEO S. ROWE gives evidence of the most exhaustive knowledge of the question from its administrative side. What we mean by that is this, nearly all the other papers, of which those by CARL SCHURZ, CHARLES J. BONAPARTE and GEORGE GLUYAS MERCER are examples, display a minute and practical knowledge of the workings of political rings and the politics of our large cities, especial stress being, of course, laid upon the civil service evil, and, in the paper of CHARLES RICHARDSON on the "Introduction of National Issues into Local Elections." But Dr. ROWE's paper treats of the question from the side, where the average educated gentleman and reformer is as totally ignorant as the lowest ward heeler, viz.: what our cities should do for their inhabitants and how they should do it. The knowledge of political evils is common property to a large number of our citizens, probably to all of those who assembled at the conference in Philadelphia, but the knowledge of administrative methods and the results of those methods in foreign cities

must always be confined more or less to the specialist. And when the specialist speaks on his specialty, then knowledge which is new and valuable is given to the hearer. One of the most interesting parts of Dr. ROWE's paper is his destruction of the comforting theory, which we have heard many Americans of the educated classes express, that the reason foreign cities are better administered and give more to their inhabitants than the average American city, is because the capitals of Europe are governed, not by the people of the city, but by the central governments of the nation, which is run by the aristocratic, and, therefore, more or less the educated classes. But Dr. ROWE says, page 113: "Finally, we come to what is, in last analysis, the most important of the determining conditions in the municipal life of Berlin, viz., that the efficiency of the city administrations is due, primarily, neither to the Prussian Monarchy nor to the Prussian Bureaucracy. It was the will, the consciously-expressed will of the people of Berlin, that determined the character of their municipality. Judged from this standpoint Berlin is more democratic than either New York or Philadelphia."

Probably the part of the book, which has the most permanent value, is the subject index, which is, comparatively speaking, very complete. Nearly everything that has been written in English on the subject of improvement of cities from a political standpoint is referred to.

There is also an account of the different organizations, which have sprung into existence within the past few years, and whose object is the improvement of either city politics or municipal administration. We strongly recommend the work to any one desirous of making himself familiar with some of the details of the great political problem, which now confronts the American people, viz., the successful government of large municipalities.

W. D. L.

THE AMERICAN CORPORATION LEGAL MANUAL. Edited by CHARLES L. BORGMEYER, of the New Jersey Bar. Plainfield, N. J.: Honeyman & Co. 1894.

This book is a compilation of what are said to be the